

**DAVID G. ARGALL**  
**29TH SENATORIAL DISTRICT**

SENATE BOX 203029  
THE STATE CAPITOL  
HARRISBURG, PA 17120-3029  
(717) 787-2637  
FAX (717) 783-8657

MAHANAY CITY (570) 773-0891  
POTTSVILLE (570) 621-3400  
HAZLETON (570) 521-9441  
WEISSPORT 1(877) 327-4255

WEBSITE: [senatorargall.com](http://senatorargall.com)  
EMAIL: [dargall@pasen.gov](mailto:dargall@pasen.gov)  
TOLL FREE: 1-877-327-4255



**Senate of Pennsylvania**

**COMMITTEES**

MAJORITY POLICY, CHAIR  
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS  
EDUCATION  
INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY  
& INNOVATION  
RULES & EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS  
STATE GOVERNMENT  
URBAN AFFAIRS AND HOUSING

April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Dr. Neeli Bendapudi, President  
Penn State University  
201 Old Main  
University Park, PA 16802

Dear Dr. Bendapudi,

We write to you today to share our opposition to any plan to close Penn State Hazleton. This campus provides a world-class education to students from both near and far at an affordable cost and directly connects them with the many employers in the Greater Hazleton region. Closing it would harm our local economy and leave behind a massive gap in the city's educational landscape. This move would directly affect the extremely diverse and multicultural community. The Hazleton School District is home to a student body that is 70% Hispanic.

Your announcement came as a surprise, as this campus is growing and will only continue to grow with the continued population boom in the Hazleton region. Penn State Hazleton students are concerned about their future educational path. Educators and staff are concerned about the future of their employment. Local employers and community leaders are concerned about the loss of high-quality, in-demand training opportunities needed for the planned expansion of Hazleton's industrial and economic development footprint.

We understand that the Commonwealth Campus Committee's decision will be data driven. We would like to provide the information we gathered during a recent roundtable discussion about the future of this campus to the committee to assist with their review:

- Penn State Hazleton campus is positioned in the **third fastest growing geographical area in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**. Additionally, it's location is prime, just minutes from the intersection of Interstates 80 and 81.
- The campus has the **second-best enrollment rate in a five-year period** of all Commonwealth Campuses. The campus currently has **525 students**.

- Over **40 million square feet of industrial space** is either under consideration or **construction** in the Greater Hazleton region, fueling the demand for higher education in the region.
- Penn State Hazleton has the **highest number of Pell Grant recipients of any Penn State campus**. This makes it the highest need campus in the Penn State University network.
- **49%** of Penn State Hazleton students are **first-generation college students**.
- **91% of Penn State Hazleton students** receive some form of financial aid.
- Penn State Hazleton is **one of only three campuses** east of the Mississippi River to have Alternative Energy Engineering program.
- Penn State Hazleton is home to students from **20 different states and 10 countries**.
- According to a 2019 study, Penn State Hazleton contributes **\$36.5 million** to the local economy.
- Penn State Hazleton offers multiple in-demand programs, including the industrial technician program, engineering program, and nursing program, that connects employees directly to local employers.
- The Hazleton Area School District, a direct pipeline of students to Penn State Hazleton, has had a consistent **annual growth rate of 8% over the last ten years**. The school district's population has increased from **10,871 to 12,609 over a ten-year period**.
- **96% of the 5,403 respondents** who took our legislative survey support keeping the campus open.
- Penn State Hazleton has impressive community support as reflected by its **41-member Advisory Council**, made up of prominent local business owners, elected officials from all three levels of government including county, state, and federal officials, nonprofit leaders, lawyers, physicians, judges, and school district superintendents.
- Penn State Hazleton **collaborates with the Hazleton LaunchBox**, a no-cost startup accelerator and co-working space designed to provide burgeoning employers with the support and resources needed to build a sustainable business.
- Penn State Hazleton serves as a large **community hub** and event space, opening its doors to various community groups to host events.

We encourage you to watch the roundtable discussion we hosted on April 10, 2025. It can be viewed at: [www.senatorargall.com/2025/03/13/roundtable-discussion-041025](http://www.senatorargall.com/2025/03/13/roundtable-discussion-041025).

Sincerely,



DAVID G. ARGALL  
State Senator  
29<sup>th</sup> District



LYNDA SCHLEGEL CULVER  
State Senator  
27<sup>th</sup> District



DANE WATRO  
State Representative  
116<sup>th</sup> District



JAMIE WALSH  
State Representative  
117<sup>th</sup> District

Cc: Dr. Margo DelliCarpini, Dr. Michael Wade Smith, Dr. Elizabeth J. Wright, David Kleppinger, Esq., Mr. Joseph Clifford

DGA/sjh